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Tough and resourceful Tala will be 13 soon, and no one will tell her what to do. On one fateful day in the forest, however, she has to find her endangered father and protect her young brother from a trio of murderous poachers. All the while, she and her brother may have to face the forest's legendary keepers--the deceptively playful characters known as the Stone People, and a giant, black bird known and feared as Culloo.

Culloo Details

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Author : Murielle Cyr

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From Reader Review Culloo for online ebook

Mrs. D. says

The thrilling adventure story of two young siblings, written with passion and love.

As the daughter of a forest ranger, I easily related to the two courageous children, Tala and Dason, who faced dangerous situations while looking for their father in the forest, which was full of danger and enemies. Left without their mother, the young children were about to be taken by child protective services. They desperately needed to find their father, who had not come home.

To avoid being sent to a foster home, the brother and sister leave their home to search for their father, threatened by hunters, who broke the law. While looking for their father, they find themselves in Culloo country. Remembering their father's story about the giant bird living on top of the mountain, the children were scared. Lovingly taking care of each other, the two spent the night in the dark forest, afraid of Culloo and the Stone People. Through their dangerous journey, they believed Culloo had more protective power than they thought. They understood that the Culloo's feathers guided them away from danger and showed them the way to their father.

This is an exciting story, very well paced, rounded, and nicely connected to the spiritual life of Native Americans. The author beautifully describes the nature of the forest and mysterious places, which easily attracts the reader. Murielle Cyr used very delicate but descriptive language while trying to teach children about preserving nature, respecting spirits and all living things. Reading this story, I felt as if I were present in each scene.

This story teaches young readers about Native American customs, which gives this book a mysterious and intriguing feeling. The background information about the spiritual traditions of Native Americans makes the children's adventure more thrilling and interesting. This story also has a sweet touch. I felt as if the mother's love was watching over her children all night.

Overall, it is a fantastic book for young readers who like real adventures with a mysterious twist. As a grown-up, I enjoyed reading this story as much as if I were a child. It is a wonderful book for slightly older children, who have outgrown picture books.

Zoe Brooks says

This review first appeared on my magic realism review blog <http://magic-realism-books.blogspot.com>

This short novel for young adults is a lovely read. I read the book in one sitting. Very rapidly your sympathies with the spirited young heroine are established. Tala's reasons for following her father into the woods with her little brother are made clear, as is the justification for hiding from the family's nosey neighbour. But I also like how towards the end of the novel we are made to revisit one of Tala's decisions. I have a problem with novels for youngsters that portray children taking huge risks without questioning and thus making the reader think twice about copying the heroine.

I enjoyed the way the book wove Native American myth and legendary creatures into the story without going over the top into fantasy. We do not see the mythical giant bird, the culloo, nor do we see the little frog-like stone people, but we see a large feather, smell the pipe smoke. Tala prays to the spirits: Great Spirit of the Air, Great Spirit of Water, of Earth and of Sky, Please protect my father from any harm. But at the end of the day Tala and Dason must rely on their wits and understanding of the forest to save their father, not on magic.

The book is well plotted and paced, keeping the reader's interest to the end. Generally this is an excellent book and one I would have greatly enjoyed when I was a youngster. My one criticism is of the cover, which looks amateurish and doesn't communicate the lovely story inside.

P.J. LaRue says

I had such fun reading Culloo! It is a tale about two children and their missing father. The children set out to find their father, who is a trail guide, and come across poachers along the way. They must find their father and elude the poachers before they are put into foster care. Ms. Cyr incorporates customs from the children's heritage allowing them to learn their meaning during the adventure. The book is the perfect length for young readers who have passed the picture book age but aren't ready for young adult yet.

Christoph Fischer says

"Cullo" by Murielle Cyr may have been written for young adults but it has a great appeal for adults, too. On the surface it is an adventure story but it covers many other issues and can be seen as a universally valid reflection on men's relationship to (Mother) nature.

The story concerns two children in search of their missing father and the sometimes scary situations that this mission brings for them in the wild. The siblings are afraid to lose their father and be taken away by childhood services since their mother has died.

The children's respectful attitude towards nature is reflected in the protective figure of a mythical bird called Cullo who the children believe is looking after them.

The book is a refreshing take on new age themes combined with the more traditional subjects for young adult fiction such as adventure and family issues.

The children themselves are lovely characters, charmingly written and instantly likeable. This is a promising first novel that I wish had been around when I was that age

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Anna del C. Dye says

Culloo by Murielle Cyr is a very nice story that conveys a lot of Native Indian folklore. It is a good reading piece that will be enjoyed over and over. It is a very well told story that will keep your attention to the end. Murielle relates an interesting tale that will teach you some Indian folklore and plant uses. This is a good way to learn about Indian culture without being overpowering or one-sided.

Tala is almost 13 and her brother Dason about nine. They find themselves alone many times, as their father Tom takes clients into the forest about their home. Their neighbor, Susan, is a very nosy woman that had tried in the past to gain Tom's favor. After he said no, she often worries about the children and knows who comes in or out of their house at all times of day or night.

Their dad doesn't come back one night, and a woman from the foster care organization is soon at their door. Tala knows it's her neighbor's doing and she is worried that her father is in trouble. She goes with her brother and they have many adventures as they try to find Tom.

They are cared for by characters that they thought belonged in the stories their father told them but after these experiences they know better.

This is a great story with lots of flavor and adventures. It will be loved by any reader in the middle grade schools and older elementary readers. Murielle Cyr did a very nice job with this tale.

Barbara Ann says

Cullo is an adventure story that will appeal to tweens and young adult readers. A brother and sister are in danger of being removed from their home by child protective services. Their father disappears and they must find him quickly. The search takes them to the forest where they must learn survival skills. A large bird called Cullo becomes their protector. Will they be able to find their father and avoid the poachers who are tracking them? This is a well written turn the page book. Children will also learn a lot about Native American culture and folklore.

Amalie Jahn says

There were so many things I enjoyed about the story Culloo. I was struck immediately by the authentic voice of the main character, a teenage girl on the cusp of adulthood. The story flowed beautifully with just enough description to give me a wonderful sense of the characters surroundings without getting bogged down with too much flowery language. The plot was fast paced and although it was clear that the story was intended for children, the character development and level of suspense made the story enjoyable for me as an adult. I especially loved how the author infused the native american culture and a respect for nature into this coming of age gem. Looking forward to sharing Culloo with the children in my life and to reading more stories by this author.

Kitty Muse Book Reviews says

The death of her mother, a stay in the hospital for her grandmother, and now her dad is missing. Tala thought life was difficult enough, dodging her nosy neighbor and dealing with her little brother, Dason. But this...

What has happened to Tom? He has had a difficult time accepting the death of his wife, Anjij, and does have a tendency to disappear. Susan, their well-intentioned neighbor, feels it is her duty to alert the authorities when he is gone for these long spells. Tala resents Susan's intrusions into their lives, but there isn't much she can do about it.

Until she is thirteen, which will be in a few days. Then—FREEDOM from nosy neighbors and people saying she's too young to be on her own, caring for her brother.

But this time, Tom's absence seems different. It concerns Tala enough that she takes off after him, or where she believes he might have gone. Annoyingly, her brother insists on coming along, and he is too clever for her to leave him alone, where he can go tell on her to Susan.

After hiding from bear poachers, who seem to have been a part of Tom's disappearance, the two siblings take off into the woods towards the top of the mountain.

A night in the rain, sheltered by an unseen presence, is followed by the discovery of a huge black feather beside the young searchers. Was it Culloo, the mighty black bird of the mountain, who had hidden them under his wing while they slept through the storm?

Ever on the move, ever followed by...something..., they reach a spot where the family has camped many times, only to find their dad in big trouble. But who led the children there? Was it the Stone People of legend? The only clues were the smell of pipe smoke and the occasional glimpse of something large in the woods.

In the end, Tala learns an important lesson, one that changes her outlook toward those who only have the best of intentions for her.

I drew a nice, hot bath, intending on reading a few chapters of this book. I ended up getting out of tepid water over an hour later, with the entire book read. It was that enthralling.

With a simple cast and few changes of scenery, Ms. Cyr has created a universe of stunning beauty. The descriptions of the characters and their relationship with nature were so well-written that I found myself deep into their lives, hoping and despairing in turns.

The forest through which Tala and Dason fled was so vivid in its telling that I had no trouble imagining the beauty of the woods and the rocky terrain.

Written for the tween to middle high school, this book would be enjoyable for all.

The one thing that stands out in my mind the most is how the author wrote in such a way as to show the

interdependent, intertwining relationships of all things. From the trees supporting their fallen comrades, to the dependence of people on people, her message showed through plainly: We all depend on each other, and without that, we become weak (such as how Tom seemed to abandon his children after his wife's death, and how the bear poacher had no respect for his surroundings).

I highly recommend this book from the bottom of my heart.

Janelle Meraz Hooper says

Murielle Cyr's book, *Culloo*, is the cream at the top of YA literature. With the content of so many stories for young adults falling in the shallow and fluff category, *Culloo* stands out as a shining example of what children's literature can be. Intelligent and well-written, *Culloo* is a winner! Did I mention it's also a very good story?! Janelle Meraz Hooper, author, *The Slum Resort* & others.

S.R. Mallery says

***** A Touching, Life Lessons Read

Murielle Cyr, in her touching, lyrically written book, "*Culloo*," puts a new spin on the term 'Latch Key Kids'. Right off the bat, we are introduced to Tala, aching to turn 13, so "nobody—just nobody—better try telling her what to do." Then there's her younger brother Dason who gets on her nerves and her absent-minded father Tom, often away at his job while trying to cope with the loss of his wife and their mother, Anjj.

As if a busy body neighbor and welfare officers knocking on their door isn't enough to create angst in the children's lives, their father suddenly goes missing, with several dangerous bear poachers in hot pursuit. It's Tala then, who decides that finding their dad and making sure he's all right is of the utmost importance.

What struck me about when the children enter the forest and search for their father, is the transformation of Tala—how her brother in time becomes less annoying, her seemingly incompetent father has actually taught them a lot about survival, and her cleverness regarding roots and herbs from her mother's Native American heritage is a true godsend.

Lovely descriptions, dangerous cat-and-mouse lurking, and growing life values keep the pages turning until the very end, when we, too, are grateful for all the gifts Tala herself realizes she has. Not just an excellent YA read, this is a great story for all of us, no matter our age.

Karen Prince says

A thrilling adventure about an almost thirteen year old girl and her younger brother who set off on their

bicycles in search of their father, Tom, who they are sure is in the nearby woods. There they discover the reason he has not returned home is that poachers are about and there is a good chance they have hurt Tom.

Their search takes them deep into the woods where they seem to be under the protection of an unseen presence which they think might be the legendary Culloo and are guided by the sweet tobacco smell of what they can only imagine are the stone people.

A delightful story of courage compassion and suspense. There were huge obstacles to overcome, heart stopping moments and subtle messages about conservation and human connectedness.

Children as young as ten would probably be able to read it for themselves because of the easy writing style but I would recommend this story to young adults too, and it would be great as a book that parents could read to under tens.

Melissa says

I definitely enjoyed this book! A short, quick read, I found myself easily able to identify and relate to Tala and Dason. At first, Tala seemed a bit old for her age, but once you begin to understand more of her background, it seems perfectly in place and reasonable. It's a great example story for so many things. The adventure aspect was great – I feel it was a good read, even for me, and don't feel it would be too scary for a younger reader. I also loved the positive examples it showed of sibling bonding and teamwork. I also love the way it incorporated Native American legends and presented a positive, non-stereotypical view of Native American culture. I think part of the reason why I connected so well with this book is that sense of wanting to explore and be independent. You can find that all throughout this book. Overall, a great read, for anyone, adult or teen, looking to escape for a few hours. The characters will grow on you like they grew on me.
